क्षेत्र से खाद्यान्न की खरीदारी का प्रावधान भी इनके मंत्रालय द्वारा किया जा रहा है? जो किसानों को न्यूनतम मूल्य दिया जाता है, उससे ज्यादा देकर, और क्या ऐसा करने से, जो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली है, वह मंहगी नहीं होगी और सामान्य जन पर इसका असर नहीं पड़ेगा?

डा॰ अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह: सभापति महोदय, एफ॰सी॰आई॰ के अलावा विभिन्न राज्य सरकारों के द्वारा प्रोक्योरमेंट का काम किया जाता रहा है, लेकिन निजी क्षेत्र जैसे NCMSL ने मध्य प्रदेश में काम किया था, लेकिन वह पूर्ण रूप से निजी क्षेत्र नहीं है, और उससे प्रोक्योरमेंट की कोई कॉस्ट नहीं बढ़ रही है। हम लोग यह विशेष ध्यान रखते हैं कि उसी कॉस्ट पर वे भी प्रोक्योरमेंट करें, ताकि ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री अमर सिंह: कारगिल और आई॰टी॰सी॰ जैसी मल्टीनेशनल कंपनियां नहीं हैं?

डा॰ अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह: एफ॰सी॰आई॰ के behalf पर वे नहीं करते हैं।

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the need has arisen to review the Food Policy of the Government in view of less than expected procurement by the Government and also in order to give concession to private players, a decision was taken to import huge quantities of foodgrains, which resulted in rise in prices of all essential commodities in the open market. The Standing Committee, in its Report, had asked the Government to review the Food Policy. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will come forward to review the Food Policy, and bring forward a new Food Policy.

डा॰ अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह: माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं पहले भी इसका उत्तर दे चुका हूं कि जैसे ही रिपोर्ट 31 अगस्त को आएगी, उसके बाद सरकार समीक्षा कर निश्चित रूप से उस पर कार्यवाही करेगी और खाद्य नीति पर अभी मैं कुछ कहना नहीं चाहता हूं। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

सुपरफास्ट के रूप में परिवर्तित की गई रेलगाड़ियां

*422. **श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि:** क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) इस वित्तीय वर्ष के दौरान कितनी रेलगाड़ियों को सुपर फास्ट रेलगाड़ी बनाया गया है;

(ख) क्या इन सब रेलगाड़ियों को सुपर फास्ट रेलगाड़ी बनाने की कोई आवश्यकता थी; और

(ग) सरकार द्वारा वित्तीय वर्ष के मध्य में इस प्रकार का परिवर्तन किए जाने के क्या कारण हैं?

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री आर॰ वेलू): (क) से (ग) एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) मौजूदा वित्तीय वर्ष में अब तक कुल 140 गाड़ियों को सुपर फास्ट में परिवर्तित किया जा चुका है।

(ख) यात्रा समय में कमी लाने के लिए भारतीय रेलवे में गाड़ियों की गति बढ़ाते रहना एक निरंतर प्रक्रिया है। कोई भी गाड़ी जो अपने प्रारंभिक स्थल से गंतव्य स्थल तक बड़ी लाइन पर 55 कि.मी. प्रति घंटा तथा मीटर लाइन पर 45 कि.मी. प्रतिघंटा की रफ्तार से चलती है, उसे सुपर फास्ट का दर्जा दिया जाता है।

(ग) सामान्यतः, रेलवे प्रत्येक वर्ष की पहली जुलाई से लागू अपनी समय-सारिणी में परिवर्तन करती है। ज्यादातर ये गाड़ियां 1-7-2006 से सुपरफास्ट बनाई गई हैं जो तर्कसंगत और व्यावहारिक भी है और नई समय-सारिणी के निकालने के समय के अनुरूप भी है।

Trains converted as superfast

†*422. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of trains converted as superfast during this financial year;

(b) whether there was any need to convert all these trains as superfast; and

(c) what prompted Government to make this type of conversion in the mid of the financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) A total of 140 trains have been converted into superfast in the current financial year so far.

(b) Speeding up of trains is an ongoing and continuous exercise over Indian Railways to reduce the travel time. Any train which attains average

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

speed from origin to desitnation of 55 kilometres per hour (kmph) or more on Broad Gauge and 45 kmph or more on Metre Gauge falls in superfast category.

(c) Generally, Railways make revision of time tables effective from first July of every year. Most of these trains have also been made superfast w.e.f. 1st July 2006 which is quite logical and reasonable and is to-terminus with the release of the new time table.

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति महोदय, हिंदुस्तान में लोकतंत्र का सर्वोच्च मंदिर राज्य सभा है। हमारे रेल मंत्रालय के दोनों राज्य मंत्री यहा उपस्थित है। मैं उनका कद कोई छोटा नहीं करना चाहता हूं, लेकिन मान्यवर, कई सप्ताह से रेल मंत्री राज्य सभा में प्रश्न काल में उपस्थित नहीं होते हैं। .....(**व्यवधान**).....

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी: महोदय, यह सवाल नहीं है।

श्री सभापति: आप बैठिए .....(**व्यवधान**)..... भंडारी जी, बैठिए। .....(**व्यवधान**).....

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी: सर्, इनकी सेवा के लिए दो-दो मंत्री हैं। .....(**व्यवधान**)..... पाणि जी, आपकी सेवा के लिए दो-दो मंत्री यहां उपस्थित हैं। .....(**व्यवधान**).....

श्री सभापति: भंडारी जी, बैठिए। .....(**व्यवधान**)..... पाणि जी, बोलिए।

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, कई सदस्यों की व्यक्तिगत भावना .....(**व्यवधान**).....

श्री यशवन्त सिन्हा: सर, आपसे मंत्री जी ने इज़ाजत ली है?

श्री सभापति: हां, ली है, यह रही। .....(**व्यवधान**).....

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी: दो-दो मंत्री आपकी सेवा के लिए बैठे हैं।

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: लेकिन चार सप्ताह तक दो-दो मंत्री बैठने से .....(**व्यवधान**).....

श्री सभापति: बोलिए, बोलिए, आप क्वेश्चन कीजिए।

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, प्रधान मंत्री तो खुद आते हैं, लेकिन रेल मंत्री नहीं आते हैं। कई सदस्यों ने इस मौके का लाभ उठाकर अपनी व्यक्तिगत भावानाएं आपके सामने अभी व्यक्त कीं।

महोदय, दोनों माननीय रेल राज्य मंत्री हैं जो उत्तर देंगे, लेकिन आपके माध्यम से मेरा सवाल है कि पिछले वर्षों में, एक-एक साल में कितनी आम गाड़ियों को सुपरफास्ट किया गया है। क्या इसका ठोस आंकड़ा सरकार के पास है? दूसरे, क्या माननीय रेल राज्य मंत्री महोदयों के पास यह

आकंड़ा है कि ट्रेन को सुपरफास्ट करने के बाद,एक आम पैसेंजर को कितना ज्यादा पैसा देना पड़ता है। जनरल क्लास में, स्लीपर क्लास में प्रति टिकट कितनी बढ़ोत्तरी होती है? एसी॰ क्लास में प्रति टिकट किनी बढ़ोत्तरी होती है, कृपा करके सदन को बताएं।

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, according to rules, the Ministers of States are also Ministers. 'Ministers' include 'State Ministers'. As long as the hon. Member gets a proper, correct and required information as regards the Railways, he should be happy.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, that is not true. The Minister has to be present and if he is not present, he has to inform you and he has to give you the reasons why he cannot be present. Sir, what reasons has he given? (*Interruptions*)

श्री सभापति: आप बोलिए। आप जवाब दीजिए।

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, having said that, with regard to the pointed questions raised by the Member, I would like to say that this is an age of speed and the Railways are constantly endeavouring to speed up the trains. In fact, on account of technology upgradation, on account of locos with 6000HP, on account of upgradation of tracks, etc., it is possible now to speed up the trains. The question is, how many trains have been speeded up till 30th June of this year, we have done about 420 trains so far. The hon. Railway Minister, during the Budget speech, had said that this year, we will speed up 200 trains. So far, we have speeded up the trains, another 64 trains would be added up by the end of the year, taking the number of superfast trains to 632 trains in the country. This will be one-third of the 1,946 mail and express trains.

That being the case, we are endeavouring to speed up more trains. We are charging Rs. 10 for the second-class, Rs. 20 for the sleeper-class, Rs. 30 for the AC-chaircar, first class, 2-tier AC and 3 tier AC-classes. We are charging Rs. 50 for the AC first-class for superfast trains. These are the supplementary charges we are charging.

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति महोदय, माननीय रेल मंत्री महोदय ने जो एक रुपए की सांकेतिक कटौती की थी, उसको देश की आम जनता ने किस दृष्टि से ग्रहण किया, यह सबको पता है। खादी के बारे में बोल दिया और कुल्हड़ के बारे बोल दिया, लेकिन उस पर अमल कितना हुआ, यह सबको पता है। एक रुपए की सांकेतिक कटौती की गई थी, टोकन कटौती, लेकिन आज पर-टिकट बिना कारण, कोई स्पीड बढ़ाते हुए, सेम ट्रेन का नम्बर बदल दिया, लेबल बदल

दिया। आठ की जगह पर दो कर दिया। सर, जनरल ट्रेन का नम्बर आठ से शुरू होता है, सुपर फास्ट ट्रेन का आठ से दी सेम गाड़ी और आठ की जगह पर दो लगा दिया और सुपर फास्ट करके एक-एक टिकट पर दस रुपए, बीस रुपए, तीस रुपए और चालीस रुपए लेना, क्या इस देश के गरीब लोगों के साथ, आम लोगों के साथ चालाकी नहीं है?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I would like to answer. One rupee reduction was announced last year, and it was welcomed by large section of commuters, especially the daily commuters. It is a substantial amount. Leave that apart, the hon. Member was asking, how many trains have been speeded up. He should be happy to know that his own train, the Puri-New Delhi Express is saving 70 minutes. If you travel Ahmedabad to Howrah, you will save 7 hours 15 minutes. If you travel from Guwahati to Trivendrum, my friends from Kerala, who know this, are saving 5 hours 25 minutes. (*Interruptions*) Again, on account of this speeding up of trains, 56 trains are having up to 30 minutes; 29 trains are saving from 31 to 60 minutes; 31 trains are saving from 61 to 120 minutes; 10 trains are saving from 121 to 180 minutes, and 14 trains save above 180 minutes. It means, the trains are saving time from 30 minutes to 3 hours, 4 hours or 5 hours. For this saving of time, can a passenger not pay Rs. 10 or 20 for superfast charges? He should pay.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, we are happy that express trains are being converted into super fast express trains. The question is, whether the Railway Ministry has conducted any study of the track conditions in view of the frequent accidents that are taking place particularly becuase of the natural calamities like floods and other things effecting the railway track. I come from a coastal region and I know how unsafe the trains are. So, that being the case, has any study been done? Secondly, the most important thing is that the Minister should take the House into confidence. Without Budget you have put charge on each and every train. Now you are saying that out of 936 trains, 620 trains have been made super fast. I have no quarrel with the number but the passenger who is travelling only 40 kms or 60 kms and if there is a stop, he has to pay Rs. 30 extra. Is it fair without taking the House into confidence, doing it in the middle of the budget and raising that much huge amount? Rs. 40 or Rs. 20 is not an ordinary amount. What is the rationale behind this? Will the Minister tell the House?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, first of all, as regards the first part of the question about accidents, the hon. Member knows about it that there were 473

accidents in 2001. Gradually this number is decreasing and last year it was 234. I am not saying that even these 234 are required. We believe that not even a single life is to be lost. Under the safety-related item works, Rs. 17,000 crores have been allotted out of which, as the hon. Member wanted to know, about 13,000 odd route kms of the tracks are being upgraded, either renewed or replaced making the rail travel safer. That is number one. Secondly, he also has mentioned about the accidents during rainy season, etc. What happened in Andhra Pradesh, I am aware of it. In fact, we are taking all precautionary steps and during the pre-monsoon period by joint inspection by the State Governments and the Railway officials they certify whether all the bridges there are intact. What has happened in Andhra Pradesh was unprecedented. Because of the cloudburst there was a burst of the tank that caused damage to the bridge which resulted in that accident. Sir, coming to the study whether this is necessary and all that, Sir, we are not at all charging any extra supplementary charges from the season ticket holders who are travelling by trains having total journey up to 325 kms, that is, for short distance trains whereas we charge for long distance trains. A point was raised that even from short distance people why we are charging. It is because we may not differentiate between the short distance trains and the long distance trains. You have got into a super fast train so you have to pay the extra charges. It is ten rupees for second class. Anyway, what I am saying is that the amount charged is minimal and I think the hon. Member, for the services rendered and for the time saved, he will appreciate it.

PROF. P.G. KURIEN: Sir, while agreeing that the Railway Ministry has done a commendable job in turning around the Railways and making it a profitable concern. But I cannot but say that I have certain reservations with regard to the point in question. There is a tendency for the Railways to make ordinary trains super fast without being asked for that. What is the reason for that tendency? Even in Kerala also, some time back one of our trains unknowingly became super fast. But what is the advantage? My concern is, of course, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu has already mentioned it, that many of our tracks are very old and even many of them were laid by the British. As these tracks having enough strength to bear this super fast trains? Is there any scientific study? The Minister has said that it has increased the speed. But speed at what cost and at what risk? Have you made any scientific study on that with regard to these super fast trains to see that these tracks are able to withstand this speed? Have you condcuted a study? Secondly, Sir, what is the purpose of making them

super fast; is it to increase the average speed? But in effect even after converting them into super fast in many of the trains average speed remains the same due to various reasons. If the average speed remains the same, what is the use of converting them into super fast and charge extra? Therefore, are you conducting a study with regard to the impact of changing trains into super fast trains and whether there is any increase in effect in average speed? If so, in how many trains?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, these are not the novel ideas which have now been introduced. As early as 1973, the concept of superfast trains has come into stay in Railways. In the Budget Speech of 1993, the then hon. Minister announced that there is an increase in demand for superfast trains. Accordingly, the criteria were prescribed only then; from 1993 onwards. Not only that, the point he raised was: what is a superfast train? If you run at an average speed of 55 kilometres per hour on BG, from the original station to the terminal station, it is called 'superfast'. It is 55 kms per hour. Similarly, if it runs at the average speed of 45 km/h on the meter gauge, that means it is 'superfast'. Now the question is, whether the tracks are able to bear that kind of speed. On the tracks, as you know, Sir, wherever we have done this or slated, for example, he has mentioned about Kerala--from Chennial to Shornurcan maintain the speed of 110 kilomtres, we can run superfast trains. Fifty-five kilometres is not a big speed which the tracks cannot bear. That means, tracks can bear the speed of 55 and 45 kilometers respectively. Certainly, what is the point in declaring the superfast trains? As I mentioned earlier, it save time for the passengers. It also helps us to have more line capacity for more freight trains and more passenger trains to run. So, I will be able to serve the people much more if we have got these fast trains introduced.

श्री सभापति: श्री जय प्रकाश अग्रवाल। माननीय सदस्य अनुपस्थित। श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल ...(व्यवधान)... Sorry, नहीं, मैं क्या बोल रहा हूं ...(व्यवधान)... नहीं, नहीं, प्यारे लाल जी को बुलाया है। आप हमारे लाल जी नहीं हैं, आप दूसरे हैं।

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: माननीय सभापति जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से एक बहुत सीधा और सरल सवाल पूछना चाहता हूं कि आपने जो रेलवे का किराया एक पैसा कम किया, उससे रेलवे की आमदनी कितनी कम हुई और सुपर फास्ट गाड़ियां बढ़ा देने के बाद जो किराया आपने बढ़ाया, उससे आमदनी कितनी ज्यादा हुई, आप इसका difference बता दीजिए।

SHRI R. VELU: I will separately furnish the Member as to what exactly is the amount that is accrued or accounted. As I mentioned, this is not a new thing introduced. It is there from 1973 onwards. In fact, it was constituted in 1973, and now what we have introduced...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: प्रति वर्ष का बता दीजिए।

SHRI R. VELU: Whatever he wants, I will furnish the details to him.

श्री सभापति: डॉ. वरुण मुखर्जी।...(*व्यवधान*)... खैर कोई बात नहीं, अच्छी बात है। श्री तारिणी कांत राय।

SHRI TARINI KANT ROY: Sir, when the Railways put their Railway Budget, they are not increasing the passenger fares or freight charges. They are increasing the fare by making trains 'superfast'. This has been the practice. In part (iii) of the answer, Sir, Railways generally, make revision of timetables effective from 1st July every year. This year, they said, Railways made timetables from 1st July for six months only. My question is: Do they think of making some more trains 'superfast' after six months for revision or for excess fare? Otherwise, what is the cuase of making timetables for six months only?

SHRI R. VELU: It is not that it is for six months. Generally, timetables are prepared and released effectively from 1st July onwards for a year and not for six months. Secondly, there is no question of increasing the fare midway. Whatever the fare is, it will continue.

Over-bridges in Bihar

*423.SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the railway over-bridges which are constructed or repaired in Bihar during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that the condition of some major railway over-bridges is fast deteriorating;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the firm steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.